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ABSTRACT

Arguing that any discussion of debate theory is incomplete without at least some analysis or review of paradigm theory, this paper begins by analogizing the arguments over paradigms to a battle ground over control of the activity. The analysis then shifts to an examination of Thomas Kuhn's sociological theory as a basis for the argument that the descipline has, in one sense, battled over its paradigms rather than using the paradigms to provide insights into the disciplinary matrix. The paper concludes with an attempt to provide an alternative perspective that is grounded in the assumption that complete knowledge of the paradigms is not immediately apparent and advocates a shift in dialectical methods from an either/or to a both/and approach. (HOD)

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Knowledge of the Debate Critic-Judge

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Any discussion of debate theory, whether in written or oral form, seems incomplete during these times without at least some analysis or review of paradigm theory. As one theorist was to note in what very quickly became a cliche, the battle has come to control contemporary discussions.[1] Additionally, the battleground seems to have extended into the undergraduate terrain and resulted in new sets of links for "policy making causes prolif" or "hypo-testing creates growth" positions. Of course, tabula rasa best promotes a sense of Rawlsian justice. An obvious prediction is that the skirmishes may quickly escalate to such conclusions as "nuke prolif is good and therefore so is policy-making."

The desirability of such theoretical disputes for contemporary academic debate is not altogether clear with alternate practitioners decrying or praising their inclusion.[2] Unfortunately, many of these disputations seem to be bypassing each other. While these opening remarks may appear as a claim for mob rule or as a claim that policy making, hypothesis testing, and the like, are such distinct paradigms that inter-paradigm communication really can't occur, the claim of this paper is that such a judgment is, at best, premature.

More directly, the idea developed in this paper is that such theoretical arguments can only occur because forensics operates in a disciplinary matrix encompassing or reflecting all that is currently refer to as paradigms. As development of this thesis, the paper will explore two related ideas: 1) Many of the arguments over paradigms have only indirectly addressed the disciplinary matrix, and 2) An alternative argument perspective will better promote understanding of the paradigms.

Status of the Matrix

Before a discussion of debate paradigms and decision rules can fruitfully proceed, a review some of Kuhn's central ideas as he discusses his sociological/historical conceptualization of scientific paradigms seems in order. Kuhn's ambiguous use of the term "paradigm" in his infamous work, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, seems to have generated as much controversy as any particular aspect of the theory.[3] In general, the term has come to have two primary meanings. As Kuhn writes:

> Whatever their number, the usages of the term 'paradigm' in the book divide into two sets which require both different names and separate discussion. One sense of 'paradigm' is global, embracing all the shared commitments of a scientific group; the other isolates a particularly important sort of commitment and is thus a subset of the first.[4]

He prefers to call the former a scientific community or "disciplinary matrix" and the latter a "paradigm or set of paradigms" which includes (but is not limited to) such things as shared symbolic generalizations, shared models, and shared values.[5] Kuhn goes on to note that this clarification renders such phrases as "pre-paradigmatic" and "post-paradigmatic" irrelevant since "in both senses of the term, paradigms have throughout been possessed by any scientific community, including the schools of what I previously called the 'pre-paradigmatic period.'"[6] Additionally, this shift has important implications for the social sciences. Since Kuhn's theory applies to the natural sciences during their fomulative periods, it is also applicable to the current stages of the social sciences.[7]

As symbolic constructs, neither term can be fully specified and each contains some elements of both public and private meaning. Obviously, like any symbolic relationship, the ties between the two are not determinate. Such an

indeterminate relationship, however, does not preclude argumentation over paradigms or require reference to strictly intuitive guidelines. Instead, discussions of paradigm desirability are based on the values of the scientific community such as "accuracy, scope, fruitfulness, and the like."[8] Additionally, incommensurability of paradigms does not mean incomparability of paradigms. What occurs is an effort after translation.[9] As Daniel Cedarbaum explains:

> If Kuhn believed that Aristotle's work were entirely incomprehensible to a twentieth-century audience, he would presumably argue that the student of the history of science should not bother to read the Physics, which he certainly does not do; rather he warns the student that is understanding of Aristotle will be incomplete as a result of his commitment to a non-Aristotelian paradigm.[10]

Argumentation over paradigms can always occur because the disputants can engage in a process to translate or explore their broader linguistic communities.

The explicit parallels that Kuhn draws between scientific communities and linguistic communities is particularly important for forensic scholars because it allows the translation of the matrix/paradigm relationships into more familiar communication terms. In making that translation, however, the relationships between the disciplinary matrix and the paradigms are seldom mentioned or if mentioned, seldom explained. Most theorists note a general/specific relationship but describe it in a variety of terms ranging from the metaphorical to the hermeneutical.

Explanations of debate paradigms as metaphors have to assume the existence of a body of knowledge that is available without the metaphor but that can be described through the process of metaphorical comparison and contrast. Beyond the claim that the metaphor is not completely descriptive of the activity, little more seems to be done.

Lake debunks the "paradigm" metaphor through primarily two means.[11] First, he argues that Kuhn's conception of natural science paradigms can only be applied metaphorically to debate as a humanistic activity. While he does note Kuhn's bifurcated use of the term "paradigm," Lake does not examine Kuhn's claims that his reconception has value for the social sciences. Second, Lake argues that debate paradigms cannot be equated with disciplinary matrices. While he does make persuasive arguments in this area, his only conclusion is that more careful terminological use needs to occur and he does not provide the guidelines for that care.

Zarefsky and Henderson, in a recent exchange on the merits of hypothesis-testing also view paradigms as metaphorical when they make the claim that "Hollihan misunderstands the analogy between argumentation and science: <u>it is figurative, not literal</u>."[12] At this point, however, they give few insights into the process of applying the metaphor to the knowledge of debate-without-the-metaphor. Perhaps the most thorough examination of paradigms as metaphors is that of Parson.[13] His concluding statement--that the forensic community cannot solve the dispute over paradigms until it achieves some semblence of goal uniformity--is a sound one and consistent with Kuhn's theory. However, in as much as Kuhn's conception of disciplines is descriptive as well as normative, more should be known about the paradigms and their relation to the discipline than is.[14]

Similar to the metaphorical analysis is Riley and Hollihan's use of Bormann's theory of communication styles to explain contemporary forensics.[15] As Bormann notes, the parallels between his theory and Kuhn's are striking.[16] Riley and Hollihan's paper clearly indicates the theoretical parallels in the field of academic debate. Unfortunately, their conclusion that the educational values of the discipline ought dictate the practices of the exemplars

is either void of meaning because the educational values and their applications to the exemplars are unknown or is the use of a club to stifle innovation--a practice decried by Kuhn and Riley and Hollihan.[17]

Goodnight and Balthrop defend and apply a hermeneutic approach to understanding contemporary forensics.[18] The hermeneutic approach is described by Balthrop as follows:

> This relationship between phenomenon and preunderstanding--which essentially contends that one cannot understand a particular without some awareness of the totality, and that, correspondingly, one cannot understand the totality without some awareness of the particular--is what is called the 'critical' or 'hermeneutical' circle. . . . In the instance of argument, analysis would involve not only an attempt to understand the language and subject matter of the argument itself but also the social grounding in which it occurred and the preunderstanding of the argument's creator.[19]

A hermeneutical analysis of the relationship between the paradigms and the matrix would clearly fit within a Kuhnian framework. However, that is not what such analyses have produced.

Balthrop's analysis of the debate judge as argument critic posits the idea that the judge enters the critical circle because s/he must evaluate arguments and explain his/her conclusions.[20] While his article produces useful insights into judging behavior, it is not intended as nor does it produce hermeneutical insights into the relationship between the disciplinary matrix and its paradigms. If anything, Balthrop's claim that this "perspective does not seem, in and of itself, to have any serious implications for most theoretical issues in debate" leaves unanswerd the questions of matrix/paradigm relationships.[21]

Goodnight's hermeneutic analysis seeks to "discover the kinds of understanding possible when discourse is taken to be argumentation" and his inves-

tigation provides numerous and valuable means for synthesizing debate and argumentation theories.[22] However, his insights do not move from the practice of debate to debate theory. Instead, he argues for a relationship between the practice and a much larger academic community.

Hingstman's comparison of the philosophy of ordinary language and the theory of debate is not called a hermeneutic analysis although his methods easily fit within that rubric as described in this paper.[23] Hingstman's effort is directed to banishing so-called descriptivist approaches to paradigms since any description presupposes a philosophical commitment that can only be addressed through ad hominem arguments. While his analysis of the descriptivist approach has much to recommend it, he falls prey to the problems he isolates by concluding that the philosophical commitment cannot be addressed as a subset of a larger linguistic community.

Rowland's attempts to develop and apply functional standards for the assessment of debate paradigms are an alternative approach to the metaphorical or the hermeneutical ones.[24] He accepts Kuhn's analysis that such standards have developed in scientific communities and attempts to provide forensic parallels. In doing so, however, he has turned Kuhn's descriptive/prescriptive theory into one that is solely prescriptive. A clear contrast can be drawn between Kuhn and Rowland on this point. Kuhn attempts to step outside of the practice of science to perform a sociological analysis of the activity. His description must "necessarily have implications for the way in which scientists should behave if their enterprise is to flourish," but is not designed as a prescription for the way the enterprise is to operate.[25] Alternatively, Rowland's five functional standards are all couched as "oughts" and his most recent work on the debate judge as judge is an extension of that.[26]

Admittedly, Rowland could argue that he is playing a part within a Kuhnian analysis and that someday his standards will be described as an "is" rather than "ought." To do so, however, Rowland is trapped within the activity and the justificationist trap that he claims to have avoided.[27] Rowland's reading of Kuhn appears to be correct--that functional standards allow a comparison of paradigms. However, Rowland's application of the material to forensics is more hortatorical than descriptive.

This section of the paper has not been intended as an attempt to say that the efforts after paradigm clarification have all been for naught. If anything, the attempted synthesis of contemporary theorizing is an argument pointing to the parallel approaches of individual theorists and concluding with the idea that the discipline has recognized its problems and is seeking to advance beyond them. To further those attempts, the next section of the paper is offered as a next step in paradigm evaluation.

Implications of the Analysis

Like others in the forensics community writing and discussing paradigms, it is necessary to do more than throw stones at glass houses. In erecting such a structure, a re-interpretation of the current controversies appears more beneficial than adding to them. The process is straightforward: isolation of a central assumption, exposition of two related implications of the assumption, and application of the framework to some of the problems in clashing over paradigms.

The same initial assumption as the other analyses serves adequately as a foundation. An initial keystone is that more knowledge exists of the disciplinary matrix than is exemplified in any given paradigm. Justification of the assumption is well documented by forensic theorists as well as elsewhere

within the communication field.[28] As exploration and internalization of the the particulars--the paradigms--continues, new insights into the higher order principles are gained. Michael Polyani's exposition on tacit knowledge is a particularly insightful analysis of the relationship between the two. As he concludes:

> The relationship of a comprehensive entity to its particulars was then seen to be the relation between the two levels of reality, the higher one controlling the marginal conditions left indeterminate by the principles governing the lower one. Such levels were then stacked on top of each other to form a hierarchy. . . .This stratification offered a framework for defining emergence as the action which produces the next higher level.[29]

Polyani's position--that the practitioners know a broader framework because they depend on it in their expositions on the paradigms--is strikingly similar to Kuhn's conceptualization of scientific enterprises.[30]

The assumption of a broader interpretive framework may seem very problematic in that it appears to either become trapped in an infinite justificationist regress or become grounded in a completely personal set of knowledges that depend on ad hominem arguments. Neither is the case. The dependence of higher order knowledge on the next lower order means arguments about the former are premised on the latter and not on an even higher conceptualization. The anchor points for the arguments move down and not up. While such anchor points may be personal, they are personal reflections of the disciplinary matrix or, at a minimum, the language community. The adequacy of the personal translation process is always questionable. Beginning with this assumption, at least two fundamental implications need recognition in the arguments about paradigms and disciplines.

The first implication is that theorists cannot argue on all that they know about forensics. The arguments hint at the higher comprehensive

knowledge and as perspectives get confronted, translated, or merged that higher order emerges and hints at a higher level. The current viewpoints depend on the accumulation of the evolving perspectives.[31]

The second implication is that the approach to accumulating forensic knowledge can either help or hinder the process. Brockriede's recent analysis of argumentative methods can aptly be applied to the battles over paradigms. He examines two perspectives on dialectic: the either/or and the both/and options.[32] Most arguments over paradigms can be fitted within the either/or dialectic. Hingstman's analysis point to the hortatorical nature of the positions.[33] As Parson aptly characterizes the disputes, "After all, my little red wagon is better than your little red wagon and it holds more."[34] Alternatively, a dialectic of both/and could better promote the understanding of and accumulation of forensic paradigms.[35]

The outgrowth of these implications--that knowledge is not complete but its accumulation can be promoted--is a redirection of the efforts after the common ground of the disciplinary matrix that underlies the diverse paradigms. The central question transforms from one of "what should be the paradigm?" to one of "what focal points direct paradigms?" Although the answer to that question is beyond the scope of this paper, reading the papers on paradigms continually seemed to uncover three: debate is a game, promotes educational values, and is designed with a sense of fairness. This paper's claim is not that all three aspects are always knowable, that disputes about and among them are resolvable, nor that the aspects are conceptually distinct. Indeed, such claims cannot be made within the perspective defended by this paper. However, efforts promoting each paradigm seem directed by these guidelines.

Willard is most poignant in his remarks that "academic debate is a 'game' in the most rigorous sense of that term."[36] Dowling, and more recently

Snider, seek to ground the practice of debate within this framework because it is a useful for one for promoting desirable educational values.[37] Alternatively, Riley and Hollihan claim that debate has become too much of a game and the "game" detracts from educational values.[38] Finally, Rowland's five functional criteria could all be read as prescriptions for enhancing the game of academic debate.[39]

An educational grounding for debate is one that has not been ignored by virtually any advocate of any paradigm. The Sedalia Conference defined forensics as "an educational activity primarily concerned with using an argumentative perspective in examining problems and communicating with people."[40] Rowland explicitly anchors his criteria within what he sees as the educational values of the activity. Although Ulrich's recent exposition indicates the difficulty in choosing a particular set of educational objectives, his article does demonstrate that the grounds for the paradigm do exist.[41] Finally, and in a very real sense, the differences between CEDA and NDT debate may be grounded in different perspectives on the educational values for the activity.[42]

The fairness aspect of academic debate is at least as fundamental as the other two and involves several interrelated concepts. Harris argues that "fairness" is an aspect of academic debate that distinguishes it from other forums of argumentation.[43] Some theorists argue that the design of the game should promote equal burdens on all participants. Equal burdens better promote competitive ideals that, in turn, develop better clash and teach better argument skills.[44] Alternatively, some writers focus on the idea that judges' decisions need to be objective to be fair.[45]

This paper began by analogizing the arguments over paradigms to a battle ground over control of the activity. Lacking the necessary wit to continue

the fantasy for long, the analysis shifted to an examination of Kuhn's sociological theory as a basis for the argument that the discipline has, in one sense, battled over its paradigms rather than using them to provide insights into the disciplinary matrix. The last section of the paper attempts to provide an alternative perspective that is grounded in the assumption that complete knowledge of the paradigms is not immediately apparent and that advocates a shift in dialectical methods from an either/or to a both/and approach. A shift in dialectical methods would better provide insights into each paradigm and the disciplinary matrix. A brief application of the both/and dialectic to the disputes on paradigms produces three focal points that can each serve as a figure on the ground provided by the other two. Further efforts after common ground in the paradigm disputes will better disclose the symbiotic relationships among the figures. The success of my claims will be self-obvious. If my approach is incorporated within others, I have been successful. If it is not, then I have not.

Endnotes

[1]Robert Rowland, "Standards for Paradigm Evaluation," Journal of the American Forensic Association 18, (1982), p. 133.

[2]G. Thomas Goodnight, "The Re-Union of Argumentation and Debate Theory," in Dimensions of Argument: Proceedings of the Second Summer Conference on Argumentation, ed. George Ziegelmueller and Jack Rhodes (Annandale, Va.: SCA, 1981), pp. 415-432; Michael Weiler, "Debate Theory: Delusion or Snare?" paper presented at the SCA Convention, Anaheim, CA, November 1981.

[3]Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 174. Margaret Masterman's analysis of the work points to twenty one different uses of the term. See Margaret Masterman, "The Nature of a Paradigm," in Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge, ed. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 59-89.

[4]Thomas Kuhn, "Second Thoughts on Paradigms," in The Structure of Scientific Theories, ed. Frederick Suppe, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), p. 460.

[5]Thomas Kuhn, "Reflections on my Critics," in Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge, pp. 271-272.

[6]Kuhn, "Reflections," p. 272.

[7]Kuhn, "Reflections," p. 242-243.

[8]Kuhn, "Reflections," p. 261.

[9]Kuhn, "Reflections," p. 276.

[10]Daniel Goldman Cedarbaum, "Paradigms," Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science 14, (1983), p. 207.

[11]Randall Lake, "Critical Issues in the Use of Decision Models in Debate: Debunking the Metaphor of the 'Paradigm.'" paper presented at the SCA Convention, Louisville, Ky, November 1982.

[12]David Zarefsky and Bill Henderson, "Hypothesis-Testing in Theory and Practice (Response to Hollihan)," Journal of the American Forensic Association 19, (1983), p. 180.

[13]Donn W. Parson, "Root Metaphors and Terministic Screens: Another Look at Paradigms," in Argument in Transition: Proceedings of the Third Summer Conference on Argumentation, ed. David Zarefsky, Malcolm Sillars, and Jack Rhodes, (Annandale, Va.: SCA, 1983), pp. 792-799.

[14]Kuhn, "Reflections," p. 237-241.

[15]Patricia Riley and Thomas Hollihan, "Paradigms as Eristic: A Changed Element in Intercollegiate Forensics," paper presented at the SCA Convention, Louisville, Ky, November 1982; Ernest Bormann, Communication Theory, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980).

[16]Bormann, pp. 64-68.

[17]Kuhn, "Reflections," p. 238; I am extrapolating from Riley and Hollihan's claim on p. 7 that innovative debate occurs, in part, because of "the creative component of communication styles as artistic.".

[18]Goodnight, "Re-Union;" V. William Balthrop, "The Debate Judge as 'Critic of Argument': Toward a Transcendent Perspective," Journal of the American Forensic Association 20, (1983), pp. 1-15.

[19]V. William Balthrop, "Argumentation and the Critical Stance: A Methodological Perspective," in Advances in Argumentation Theory and Research, ed. J. Robert Cox and Charles Arthur Willard (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), p. 242.

[20]Balthrop, "Debate Judge," pp. 2-3.

[21]Balthrop, "Debate Judge," p. 12.

[22]Goodnight, "Re-Union," p. 430, n. 5.

[23]David B. Hingstman, "Lessons Learned: The Philosophy of Ordinary Language and the Theory of Debate," in Argument in Transition, pp. 772-791.

[24]Rowland, "Standards;" Robert Rowland, "Debate Paradigms: A Critical Evaluation," in Dimensions of Argument, pp. 448-475; Robert Rowland, "The Debate Judge as Debate Judge: A Functional Paradigm for Evaluating Debates," Journal of the American Forensic Association 20, (1984), pp. 183-193.

[25]Kuhn, "Reflections," p. 237.

[26]Rowland's approach is included within Hingstman's critique.

[27]Rowland, "Debate Judge," p. 193.

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[28]See Thomas Farrell, "Knowledge, Consensus, and Rhetorical Theory," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 62, (1976), pp. 1-14; Jesse Delia, "Constructivism and the Study of Human Communication," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 63, (1977), pp. 66-83; and Wayne Brockriede, "Arguing about Human Understanding," Communication Monographs, 49, (1982), pp. 137-147.

[29]Michael Polyani, The Tacit Dimension, (Garden City: Anchor, 1967), p. 55.

[30]Michael Polyani, pp. 9-13.

[31]Kuhn, Structure, pp. 205-207.

[32]Brockriede, pp. 142-144.

[33]Hingstman, p. 773.

[34]Parson, p. 798.

[35]Brockriede, p. 145.

[36]Charles Willard, "The Nature and Implications of the 'Policy Perspective' for the Evaluation of Oral Argumentation," paper presented at the SCA Convention, San Francisco, CA, December 1976, p. 2.

[37]Ralph Dowling, "Debate as Game, Educational Tool, and Argument: An Evaluation of Theory and Rules," Journal of the American Forensic Association 17, (1981), pp. 234-241; Alfred C. Snider, "Games without Frontiers: A Design for Communication Scholars and Forensic Educators," Journal of the American Forensic Association 20, (1984), pp. 162-170.

[38]Riley and Hollihan, p. 14.

[39]Rowland, "Standards," pp. 137-139.

[40]James McBath, ed., Forensics as Communication: The Argumentative Perspective, (Skokie, Ill.: National Textbook, 1975), p. 11.

[41]Walter Ulrich, "The Influence of the Judge on the Debate Round," in Argument in Transition, pp. 938-950.

[42]Ronald Lee, Karen King Lee, and Matthew Seeger, "Comparison of CEDA and NDT: Differences in Program Characteristics and Forensic Director Attitudes," in Argument in Transition, pp. 845-857; Thomas Hollihan, Patricia Riley, and Curtis C. Austin, "A Content Analysis of Selected CEDA and NDT Judges' Ballots," in Argument in Transition, pp. 871-882.

[43]Scott Harris, "A Jurisprudential Approach to the Final Rebuttal," in Argument in Transition, p. 904.

[44]Robert Rowland, "The Primacy of Standards for Paradigm Evaluation: A Rejoinder," Journal of the American Forensic Association 18, (1982), pp. 158-159.

[45]Ulrich, pp. 943-947; Balthrop, "Debate Judge," pp. 9-11.